



Plant Materials Program

2002 Highlights

About the Program

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Plant Materials Program is a nationwide network of 26 Plant Materials Centers and associated Plant Materials Specialists, based in ecologically distinct service areas. Together, these centers and specialists seek out plants and state-of-the-art technology to restore critical habitats, mitigate environmental concerns, and sustain healthy natural resources.

Plant Materials Centers evaluate plants for specific conservation traits, select top performers, and make these materials available to the public as conservation plant releases. They also develop innovative ways for land managers to use and manage a variety of conservation plants. Specialists relay information about new plant releases and offer on-the-ground assistance with conservation plantings.

Conservation Plant Releases

The Program selected and released 27 new plants to the public in fiscal year 2002 to help solve a variety of conservation challenges. The releases are immediately available for Farm Bill program use – CRP plantings, wetland restoration, wildlife habitat enhancement, buffers, odor control, and forage improvement. The plant releases also help solve resource issues such as revegetation after drought and wildfire, streambank and shoreline stabilization, native roadside plantings, and windbreaks and shelterbelts.



Blythe Germplasm desert saltbush, a 2002 release by the Tucson, AZ Plant Materials Center. Conservation uses: erosion control plant on degraded rangelands and critical areas such as abandoned cropland and road cuts.

Commercial Production of Conservation Plant Releases in 2002

The Plant Materials Program has released a total of 562 conservation plants since 1937, and over 400 are still used in conservation practices. The table to the right summarizes the commercial production and sales of 347 plant releases in 2002. Plant Materials conservation plants are significant in the quantities produced for conservation use, and the commercial sales which generate economic value.

Type	Amount	Value (sales)
Certified Seed	8,563,000 lbs.	\$37,562,000
Common Seed	8,493,000 lbs.	\$41,084,000
All Plants	16,194,000 each	\$17,082,000
Total Value		\$95,728,000

Technology Transfer

In addition to conservation plant releases, Plant Materials Centers and Plant Materials Specialists develop state-of-the-art planting technology and transfer it through publications and presentations targeted towards NRCS field offices, conservation partners, and the public.

Oral Products

Type of Presentation	Number	# of People
Training Sessions	118	2,444
Tours	115	3,206
Local Presentations	209	18,503
Regional Presentations	116	5,814
National Presentations	26	5,050
International Presentations	14	3,033
Total Presentations	598	38,050

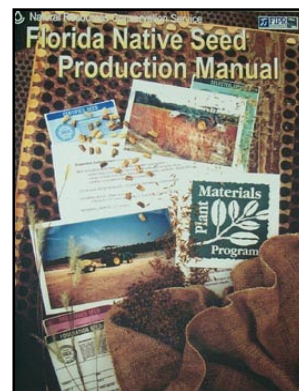


April 2002 – Texas Agricultural Extension Agents listen as Jim Stevens, East Texas Plant Materials Center manager, explains the function of constructed wetland cells.

Written Products

Type of Publication	Number
Technical Notes	20
Stand-alone Publications	13
Popular Articles	149
Technical and Progress Reports	93
Plant Guides and Fact Sheets	38
Published Symposia, Posters, and Referred Papers	51
Total Publications	364

A manual prepared by the Brooksville, FL, Plant Materials Center which contains comprehensive information about growing Florida native species for seed including new planting and production technology.

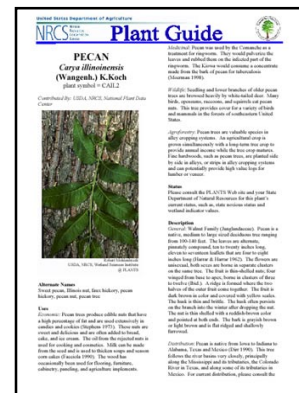


Technology Transfer through the Web Site

The purpose and goal of the Plant Materials Program web site is to transfer state-of-the-art plant sciences technology to NRCS field offices, land managers, and other cooperators. Plant Materials is on the web at: <http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

Users have direct access to:

- Over 800 Plant Materials publications
- Information on over 500 Conservation Plant Releases
- Sources of conservation plant materials
- Over 300 Plant Fact Sheets and Plant Guides
- Over 250 web sites with related information



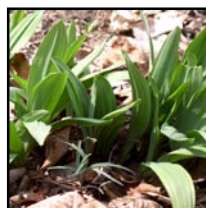
The Plant Materials Program web site is used by thousands of people in the United States and over 30 foreign countries. Below are a few numbers on the use of the site.

	2002 Totals
Site Hits	1,122,671
Pages Served	281,582
User Sessions	87,396
Publications Accessed	157,351
Plant Fact Sheets/Plant Guides*	125,228

* data from PLANTS database web site report

Technology and Plant Development / Applied Research

- There were 412 studies with 41,396 plots and 93,484 plot evaluations in 2002.
- 654 field plantings were on farms and ranches.
- 240 conservation field trials were in place to evaluate and demonstrate new technology.



In 2002, the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation requested the Alderson, WV Plant Materials Center for assistance with development of cultivation techniques for *Allium tricoccum*, ramps (also known as wild leeks). Ramps are a food source and are used for medicinal purposes.

For more information, visit <http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov> and <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>

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